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18 June 1999

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 18 JUNE 1999 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ERITREA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to forward the attached letter from His Excellency Mr. Haile Weldensae, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Eritrea, written yesterday, 17 June and addressed to you (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would kindly circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Haile MENKERIOS
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

99-18099 (E) 180699

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Annex

Letter dated 17 June 1999 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Eritrea addressed to the President of the Security Council

With my respects to you and the other members of the Security Council, and our appreciation of the Council's concern to settle peacefully the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea, I wish to set the record straight and clarify the facts concerning the peaceful process outlined in the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Framework and reaffirm Eritrea's commitment to that process.

In a letter dated 14 June 1999 to the President of the Security Council (S/1999/678), Ethiopia's Foreign Minister accuses Eritrea of "obstructing peace and the implementation of the OAU Framework". The Ethiopian Foreign Minister further claims that the OAU High-Level Delegation has pronounced a "new clarification" on "Badme and environs" that is consonant with Ethiopia's "interpretation".

As you will recall, Eritrea had submitted to the Security Council, in its letter of 12 March 1999 (S/1999/274), the written clarifications that the OAU High-Level Delegation provided it with on 26 January 1999. The clarification was unequivocal on several points. Thus, "Environs refers to the area surrounding Badme Town". In regard to redeployment, the clarification reads: "The redeployment is of Eritrean troops from Badme Town and its environs. This should be immediately followed by the demilitarization of the entire border, through the redeployment of the forces of both parties along the entire border, to positions to be determined subsequently, as part of the implementation process of the Framework Agreement". Indeed, it was on the basis of the clarifications provided to it in writing that Eritrea accepted in good faith the OAU Framework Agreement.

The 11-point Framework Agreement is unambiguous, and its most essential contents may be condensed into the following five sequential measures:

- Formal acceptance of the Framework Agreement by both sides;
- Formal cessation of hostilities;
- Eritrean forces to redeploy from Badme and environs as a mark of goodwill and consideration to OAU;
- The demilitarization of the entire border through the redeployment of the forces of both parties along the entire border as part of the implementation process of the Framework Agreement;
- Demarcation of the boundary within a period of six months.

Eritrea officially announced its formal acceptance of the Framework Agreement by its letter of 27 February to the current Chairman of OAU and the United Nations Secretary-General. Eritrea has again reiterated its full commitment to the Agreement and readiness to implement all its provisions, by

its public pronouncements as well as letters from President Isaias to President Blaise Compaore when the envoy of President Compaore and the envoy of the Secretary-General visited Asmara towards the end of April.

In the event, the Framework Agreement remains blocked and peace is being kept hostage only because Ethiopia has reneged on its earlier commitment by putting forth new preconditions.

Ethiopia's Foreign Minister once again restated Ethiopia's preconditions when he stated in his letter: "... The bottom line for Ethiopia is that Eritrea should and must withdraw from all occupied Ethiopian territories and that the Ethiopian administration - forcefully uprooted - should be restored. That is what the OAU Framework required of Eritrea. ... Any interpretation of the OAU Framework Agreement that suggests that Eritrea would withdraw from territories it occupied in May but retain those it occupied in June cannot be taken seriously".

Ethiopia's Foreign Minister is clearly reading from a new script. The OAU Framework Agreement was endorsed by the Central Organ in December 1998 and therefore covered the clashes of May and June of that year. Moreover, the Framework Agreement is not only unambiguous in terms of redeployment of troops, but operative paragraph 7 provides for the determination of the origin of the crisis "through an investigation that will be carried out on the incidents of 6 May 1998 and on any other incident prior to that date ... including the incidents of July-August 1997".

Ethiopia's underlying motive in pursuing this approach is transparent. Ethiopia wants to be exonerated from the acts of aggression that it has perpetrated in the preceding years and to legitimize the Eritrean territories that it has occupied in the process.

Indeed, Ethiopia has persistently violated Eritrean sovereignty, international law and covenants to which it is a signatory by:

- Invading the sovereign Eritrean territories of Bada and areas in Badme in July 1997;
- Issuing unilaterally an illegal map in October 1997 redrawing Eritrea's international boundaries;
- Attacking Eritrean units in the Badme area on 6 May 1998 and starting all-out attacks against Eritrea throughout the common border, including air attacks on the capital, Asmara;
- Declaring war on Eritrea through a declaration of its Parliament on 13 May 1998.

Ethiopia's selective approach is not only untenable in terms of international law. It also defies common sense. With regard to international law, the status quo in Africa is anchored in the respect of the boundaries inherited from colonial rule. This is the sacrosanct OAU principle governing the behaviour of neighbouring countries. In the conflict between Eritrea and

Ethiopia, the restoration of the status quo ante refers to redressing any and all territorial violations that Ethiopia has perpetrated by violating this fundamental OAU principle. Ethiopia's arguments are thus nothing but an effort to gloss over its violations prior to 6 May 1998. In fact, it is tantamount to the logic of a serial killer who, when caught in the act of murdering his fifth victim, argues that he must not be held responsible for the four previous crimes, since he was not caught red-handed.

In a classic case of perversion of the truth, Ethiopia's Foreign Minister accuses the international community of "appeasing Eritrea" and urges the Security Council "to give Eritrea a clear signal that we are governed by international law and that aggression cannot pay. The time to do so may be long overdue, but it is better later than never".

If anything, the Security Council has been tolerant of Ethiopia. The Foreign Minister has finally admitted, in his letter, that Ethiopia has unleashed the large-scale offensives since 6 February this year, which have claimed and continue to claim tens of thousands of lives. (Ethiopia had earlier denied this and even fabricated the fictitious bombing of Adi-Grat by Eritrea on 5 February.) Ethiopia has perpetrated this act of aggression - and presently occupies new areas in Eritrea - in contravention of Security Council resolutions calling upon both sides to observe a cessation of hostilities. Ethiopia has further violated the moratorium on air strikes brokered by the United States Government in June last year to target civilian areas in Eritrea.

Additionally, Ethiopia has deported about 60,000 Eritreans and Ethiopians of Eritrean origin in the most inhuman manner and confiscated their life-long earnings. The international community has taken forcible measures to punish such abhorrent acts of ethnic cleansing elsewhere. On the other hand, Ethiopia's leaders have not even been reprimanded - let alone faced stern measures - for the identical crimes that they have committed and still continue to commit.

Then too, the international community remained silent when Ethiopia expelled Eritrea's ambassador to OAU and ransacked his residence in violation of the Vienna Conventions and the OAU Headquarters Agreement. This Ethiopian act has been tolerated even as Eritrea requires unhindered access to OAU while the latter is still seized of the conflict.

It is therefore Ethiopia which has been allowed to get away with acts of aggression and a catalogue full of other grave human rights violations.

The issues of the occupation of territory and aggression are not and cannot be determined solely by the declarations of one or the other party to a dispute, but by the determination of the facts by impartial third parties on the basis of objective, relevant evidence. Eritrea has been committed to any such fair determination while it rejects any attempt, direct or indirect, to make it renounce its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Finally, Eritrea is unequivocally committed to the implementation of the Framework Agreement as clarified by OAU on 26 January 1999. Any other attempt to interpret the Framework Agreement differently will violate the integrity of

the document and will endanger peace and security in the region. In this respect, it is incumbent on the Security Council, which is ultimately responsible for the maintenance of peace and security, to ensure that its calls for cessation of hostilities, a ceasefire and the peaceful settlement of the dispute are observed by the implementation of an unadulterated OAU Framework Agreement.

Haile WELDENSAE
Minister

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LETTER DATED 18 JUNE 1999 FROM THE CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF YUGOSLAVIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to enclose herewith, a letter from Momir Bulatovic, President of the Federal Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, relative to the question of Prevlaka (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Vladislav JOVANOVIC
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

99-18112 (E) 180699

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Annex

Letter dated 18 June 1999 from the President of the Federal Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour of addressing you with reference to the forthcoming debate in the Security Council about the mandate of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Prevlaka (UNMOP). I would like to underscore on this occasion as well that my Government highly appreciates the contribution made by the presence of the United Nations Mission to the established security regime, as well as to the atmosphere of tolerance in this sensitive region.

On behalf of the Federal Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, I am addressing you with a request that the Security Council extend the mandate of UNMOP for another six-month period, as of 15 July 1999.

With regard to the disputed territorial issue of Prevlaka, I would like to inform you of the current situation in the negotiations between the delegations of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Croatia.

The delegations of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and of the Republic of Croatia responsible for negotiations aimed at determining the line of delimitation of the state border in the Southern Sector and at the settlement of the disputed territorial issue of Prevlaka have had four meetings to date: in Zagreb on 15 September 1998, in Belgrade on 9 October 1998, in Zagreb on 23 December 1998 and in Belgrade on 9 March 1999.

The two sides have exchanged views on delimitation of the state border in the area of Prevlaka.

The Yugoslav side has presented its arguments, which constitute the legal basis of its position on the stretching of the inter-state border. The presented arguments (federal and republic laws of the Socialist Republic of Montenegro and the Socialist Republic of Croatia) confirm that, at the relevant time, the border of each republic was determined in such a manner that the entire Bay of Boka Kotorska, including the Prevlaka Peninsula, belonged to the territory of the Republic of Montenegro. The application of those laws in practice testifies to the fact that both republics agreed to the joint border.

The Croatian side has not stated anything that might seriously contest the arguments presented by the Yugoslav side.

The expectation of the Yugoslav side that serious and comprehensive consideration of the arguments presented would follow in accordance with the principles of conscientious negotiation and the commitments referred to in the relevant Security Council resolutions has not been fulfilled. Such an attitude is regarded by the Yugoslav side as reluctance on the part of the Croatian side to engage in serious negotiations, the evidence of that being the proposal by the Croatian side to suspend the negotiations at the expert level and to resume

them at a higher political level. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is not of the opinion that the disputed territorial issue of Prevlaka can be reduced solely to a political issue. We believe, instead, that the solution can be found through negotiations, the prerequisite being the unreserved political willingness of both sides to negotiate in good faith, on the basis of the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant provisions of applicable international law.

The aggression of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia that was launched on 24 March 1999 and carried out from the territory of the Republic of Croatia as well prevented the two sides from resuming negotiations under normal conditions, on an equal footing, according to the mutually agreed principles and procedure of conscientious negotiation, in good faith, as well as in conformity with the commitments under Security Council resolutions that both sides had undertaken.

The end of the NATO aggression on my country has eliminated the objective obstacles to the resumption of the already initiated negotiations over the disputed issue of Prevlaka. The Yugoslav side is ready to resume negotiations without delay, with the aim of finding a solution to this sticking issue as soon as possible, in the interest of restoring durable peace and security in this area, as well as in the region at large.

Attaching key importance to the presence of the United Nations Mission in Prevlaka for the maintenance of necessary security conditions until the two sides find a negotiated solution that would satisfy them both, the Federal Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia expects the Security Council to reach a decision, proceeding from its primary responsibility for preserving peace and security in the world, to extend the Mission's mandate after its expiry on 15 July 1999 until 15 January 2000.

Momir BULATOVIĆ

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Fifty-fourth year

THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

Report of the Secretary-General

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 22 of General Assembly resolution 53/203 A of 18 December 1998, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report every three months during its fifty-third session on the progress of the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan (UNSMA). The present report, which covers developments since the issuance of the Secretary-General's report of 31 March 1999 (A/53/889-S/1999/362), is also submitted in response to requests by the Security Council for regular information on the main developments in Afghanistan.

II. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN

A. Political developments

2. My last report described the two rounds of intra-Afghan talks held in Ashkabad, Turkmenistan, which concluded on 15 March with a statement issued by the two parties, indicating that they would meet again, preferably inside Afghanistan, after the religious holiday of Eid-Al-Fitr. Shortly after the talks concluded, the two sides lapsed into mutual public recriminations, which cast doubt on whether talks would resume at all. On 10 April, the Taliban supreme leader, Mullah Mohammad Omar, issued a statement indicating that the Taliban were not willing to continue talks with the opposition.

3. There has been no change in the Taliban decision since then despite the United Nations's efforts to persuade them otherwise (see paras. 11-14 below). The Taliban viewpoint is that the talks can only be resumed if the opposition accepts the Emirate system. The Taliban would be prepared to share Government

with the other side in the event that the latter join the Emirate. Commander Ahmad Shah Massoud and his spokesmen have repeated that they cannot accept the Emirate system since the Taliban have no popular or legal mandate to govern or to dictate terms.

4. The talks have thus stalled. Mutual confidence has eroded and meaningful contact between the two sides at a senior level is negligible. The two sides have chosen to revert to fighting to settle their differences. The escalation and spread of the fighting is detailed in the paragraphs 8 to 10 below.

5. There is widespread disappointment over the breakdown in the talks, expressed by both the international community at large and by most key neutral Afghan political groups. Both I and my Special Envoy have expressed the United Nations deep regrets over the Taliban's decision not to return to the negotiating table. The President of the Security Council, in a statement to the press on 19 April, urged the two sides to resume talks. Russia and Pakistan also released a joint statement along the same lines during the visit of the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, to Moscow. The United States Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs has urged Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran to use their influence to persuade the warring factions to restart the talks. Many neutral Afghan personalities have also supported the resumption of dialogue.

6. On 29 April, the former King of Afghanistan, Zahir Shah, announced an initiative whereby a group of 30 Afghan political figures would meet in Rome to prepare for the convening of a Loya Jirgah (Grand Assembly). The Taliban have publicly rejected this initiative, stating that the former King had lost the people's trust. The United Front (UF) welcomed the idea of the Loya Jirgah and awaited more detail. A broad range of Afghan groups as well as certain Member States, including the United States of America, have welcomed Zahir Shah's initiative.

7. China and Japan were among a few countries which have recently sent delegations of diplomats to Kabul and other places in Afghanistan. Pakistan, Turkmenistan and the Taliban signed a tripartite declaration of intent on 30 April to construct a gas pipeline traversing Afghanistan on a north-south axis. The Uzbek Minister for Foreign Affairs, Abdulaziz Kamilov, visited Islamabad and Kandahar from 31 May to 2 June. A Taliban delegation led by the Minister of Mines visited Switzerland on official invitation at the end of May.

B. Military situation

8. The period under review has seen a marked deterioration in the military situation. The military posture of both belligerents has hardened. The UF military commander, Ahmad Shah Massoud, met the Russian Minister of Defense in early April. On 11 April, the day after the Taliban's decision not to resume the peace talks, the UF fired three rockets into the suburbs of Kabul. This shelling of Kabul continued sporadically throughout the reporting period, culminating in over 40 rockets being fired during May, with 20 fired on 20 May alone, resulting in 2 civilian casualties.

9. The fighting intensified in the northern and central areas. On 16 April, heavy fighting broke out around Khenjan, north of the strategic Salang tunnel in Baghlan province, as well as in various localities of Faryab province in the north-west. Small scale guerilla activity also occurred in the eastern provinces of Laghman and Kunar. On 21 April, anti-Taliban forces, comprising elements from the Hezb-e-Wahdat and Harakat-e-Islami, seized the city of Bamyan in central Afghanistan from the Taliban. On 28 April, the Taliban launched a counter attack on Bamyan and conducted bombing missions on UF-held towns such as Taloqan, Dara-e-Suf and Jebel-u-Seraj. On 2 May, more heavy fighting took place on the front lines north of Kabul as well as around Khanabad in Kunduz province. On 9 May, the Taliban succeeded in recapturing Bamyan and proceeded further to take Yakolang, the second largest town in Bamyan province, on 14 May.

10. On 19 May, the Taliban reported an attempted uprising in the western province of Herat by Afghan dissidents, who, the militia alleged, had been supported by a neighbouring country, the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Islamic Republic of Iran categorically denied the involvement in the event. Over 100 arrests were made by the Taliban and some eight people were executed. The UF claimed that over 50 people were executed. The Harakat-e-Islami, an opposition Shia party, accused the Taliban of conducting a systematic purge of Shia in Herat.

III. ACTIVITIES OF THE MISSION

11. Since the conclusion of the second round of intra-Afghan talks in Ashkabad on 15 March, the Mission has spared no effort to try to persuade the two sides to resume their talks in accordance with the Ashkabad declaration. To this end, UNSMA has held a series of face-to-face meetings with senior advisers from both sides. The Mission has urged that if the two sides feel unable to resume the talks at a high level and in the same format, then consideration should at least be given to some form of direct contact.

12. To create a more conducive atmosphere for talks to resume, the Mission has encouraged both sides to consider and agree upon mutual confidence-building measures. The Security Council, in a statement to the press on 19 April, asked the Mission to pursue confidence-building measures with the two belligerents.

13. The Mission has promoted three types of confidence-building measures: military, political and humanitarian. The proposals for military measures have included the appointment by the two sides of military liaison officers and the formation of a joint conflict control centre. Political measures involve finding out whether there is scope for joint statements by the two sides on such issues as military truces or ceasefires to allow the polio immunization campaign to proceed. Humanitarian measures include the exchange of prisoners and of comprehensive lists of prisoners held; and allowing the free flow of commercial and relief goods.

14. The response of the two sides to these overtures was initially receptive but they have become markedly less interested as the fighting has escalated. So far, the one confidence-building measure on which both sides have been able to agree, in principle, is the release of prisoners-of-war. The Mission had

suggested to both sides a large enough exchange to show their genuine commitment and proposed the release of 200 prisoners-of-war by each side. Both sides agreed, but, at the time of writing, had not yet implemented this understanding.

15. The Mission has kept a rotational presence in Kabul since 10 April, when UNSMA military advisers returned to Kabul for the first time since late August 1998. UNSMA officers also joined United Nations inter-agency missions to other Afghan cities. The senior military adviser went, in mid-May, on the first United Nations mission to Mazar-e-Sharif since its withdrawal in August 1998.

16. The Mission has emphasized its close cooperation with the assistance community and has participated in meetings with organizers for the Afghanistan Support Group (ASG) meeting held in Stockholm on 21 and 22 June. UNSMA and the office of the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator produced a joint paper for the meeting, examining further the actual and potential scope for cooperation between the political and humanitarian efforts in promoting peace.

17. Members of the Mission participated in an assessment mission for the proposed Civil Affairs Unit within UNSMA. The mission visited Kandahar, Kabul and Dushanbe and met senior representatives of the Taliban and UF. The Mission explained to them the purpose of the proposed Civil Affairs Unit. Both sides gave their agreement and support for the proposal.

18. Following the recommendations of the assessment mission for the establishment of a Civil Affairs Unit as part of UNSMA, the United Nations will start recruitment of civil affairs officers for phased deployment both in the Taliban and non-Taliban areas, security conditions permitting. The initial objectives of the UNSMA civil affairs officers will be modest, in view of the complex and difficult situation on the ground. They will work closely with local Afghan authorities as well as with United Nations agencies and programmes, NGOs and other human rights organizations. Their primary objective should be to seek, through their presence and contacts with the local authorities, to promote respect for minimum humanitarian standards and deter massive and systematic violations of human rights and humanitarian law in the future. The Civil Affairs Unit will report to the Department of Political Affairs through the Mission on a regular basis.

IV. MY SPECIAL ENVOY AND ACTIVITIES AT UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS

19. On 2[illegible] March, my Special Envoy for Afghanistan, Lakhdar Brahimi, completed his latest mission to Afghanistan and the region, the details of which were described in my previous report. Mr. Brahimi then came back to New York in early April for consultations with me and senior Secretariat officials, as well as with representatives of Member States concerned.

20. Mr. Brahimi visited Washington on 16 April for consultations with officials at the State Department. On 19 April, he briefed the Security Council on the outcome of his mission and the political and military situation on the ground. He expressed concern over the lack of progress for peace owing to the absence of political will on the part of the Afghan warring factions, which seemed to be

bent on fighting each other. He also expressed disappointment with the modest level of cooperation among countries concerned, in particular those of the "six plus two" group. My Special Envoy reminded the Council that Afghanistan was a landlocked country and that ammunition, weapons and other war matériel, which had so far enabled the Afghan factions to continue fighting, must either have come from or through those neighbouring countries.

21. Mr. Kieran Prendergast, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, convened a meeting of the "six plus two" informal group, at the ambassadorial level, on 12 May, with a view to discussing the proposed high-level meeting in Tashkent. The group comprises all the immediate neighbours of Afghanistan - China, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan - as well as the Russian Federation and the United States of America. Explaining the developments in Afghanistan, including the collapse of the intra-Afghan dialogue in Ashkabad, Mr. Prendergast voiced disappointment at the lack of real progress towards peace and stressed the responsibility of the group to find a common approach for a settlement of the Afghan conflict.

22. In accordance with the agreement reached at the meeting, experts of the six plus two group met on 25 May to discuss the text of a draft statement for the proposed high-level meeting of the group in Tashkent. However, little progress was made owing to differences on various substantive points among the members.

V. HUMANITARIAN SITUATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

A. Humanitarian situation

23. The ongoing conflict continues to affect all aspects of civilian life in many parts of Afghanistan. Continued instability in parts of the central, northern and western regions augurs more civilian suffering and will create new humanitarian challenges. The food supply remains precarious in many parts of the country.

24. Regarding health needs, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO), in collaboration with the Afghan health officials and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), carried out the first round of the National Immunization Days from 9 to 11 May, providing oral polio vaccine for over 3.6 million children under five. UNICEF and WHO continue to provide health education and medical supplies to health institutions in various parts of the country. WHO and UNICEF, in collaboration with local officials and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), are seeking to assist the population of Gulran district in Herat province where a mystery disease, which appeared in May, killed about 200 people.

25. Refugees continue to return. Two hundred-eighty Afghan refugee families returned with the assistance of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) from Hangu and Thall camp in Pakistan to Logar and Paktia provinces in Afghanistan. From Balochistan, 114 families returned in late May, mostly to Balkh and Jowzjan provinces. A total of 339 families returned from Pakistan via Afghanistan's southern region. Over 80 families and more than 2,500 individuals returned from the Islamic Republic of Iran to Nimroz

province. A planned voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees from Iran through Herat is expected to begin on 19 June. The World Food Programme (WFP) has allocated 6,500 tons of food aid as a repatriation package for up to 130,000 returnees from Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran, who are anticipated to settle in four areas of Afghanistan.

26. Regarding narcotics, a strategic analysis of the expansion of opium cultivation in Afghanistan was conducted in three districts of Kunar, four districts of Laghman and one district of Logar provinces. The annual opium poppy survey of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme is under way, performed by 58 trained survey coordinators in southern and eastern regions in May. A survey in Badakhshan province is to follow in June. The overall survey will be completed in three months time and the final report issued by September 1999.

27. In the area of mine-clearance, the Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan within the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan has thus far cleared 13.9 million square meters of mined and battlefield areas and surveyed 12.4 million square meters of minefield areas. The total remaining mined area is estimated at 703 square kilometres, of which over 90 per cent is agricultural and grazing land. Since 1990, the Programme has destroyed nearly one million mines and unexploded ordnance in Afghanistan and briefed 4.7 million civilians on mine awareness.

28. In Kabul, an estimated quarter of the one million residents receive some form of international humanitarian assistance. Many families have sold their belongings to survive. However, life in Kabul has not come to a standstill following the partial withdrawal in July 1998 of support for humanitarian programmes (along with the bulk of the NGOs). Core emergency feeding programmes have continued despite some disruptions. There is no significant investment in rehabilitation of the infrastructure or commercial development and employment opportunities are few. Salaries for civil servants are either paid late or not at all.

29. The focus of emergency humanitarian assistance in the Kabul region this spring was on Wardak and Logar provinces, where thousands of rural families lost their homes in an earthquake in February 1999. A programme is under way for the rehabilitation of up to 8,000 destroyed homes, aimed at providing basic shelter before the winter. Kabul-based agencies are developing a regional disaster plan to meet future natural or man-made disasters. International help has been extended to the war-affected population of the Shomali valley, north of Kabul. Its extensive irrigation network is of potential importance for the area's food security. Efforts by United Nations agencies and others to transport vaccines and other essential supplies by land to the area continue to meet with unnecessary obstructions.

30. In central Afghanistan, continued fighting between Taliban and UF forces in the three districts of Bamyan, Shibar and Yakolang (estimated population 182,000) has resulted in some 20,000 people leaving Bamyan and Shibar and an unknown number fleeing Yakolang. Most of the displaced have sought sanctuary with the local population in neighbouring districts and around 100 to 150 people have been arriving daily as refugees in Quetta, Pakistan. In Hazarajat, food

production, food availability and transport accessibility are all at risk and transport costs have increased. The population has not yet recovered from the blockade of 1997-1998.

31. A food security coordination group, comprising NGOs and United Nations agencies, has launched an integrated response to the food shortages. This operation aims to assist 30,000 vulnerable households by the end of 1999, through food distribution and cash for work schemes. The World Food Programme will send 1,800 tons of food for over 70,000 people in the central highlands of Hazarajat, targeting the poorest, the landless, female-headed households and the displaced.

32. In northern Afghanistan, the first mission of United Nations international personnel, comprising the office of the United Nations Coordinator, WFP, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, UNICEF, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, FAO and UNSMA, visited the regional capital of Mazar-e-Sharif in May. United Nations activities will increase gradually over the forthcoming months. Negotiations are ongoing with the Uzbekistan authorities to permit the United Nations, and specifically WFP, to import wheat by barge across the Amu Darya (the frontier bridge has been closed since May 1997). The area is not easily reached from the south because of the closure of the Salang highway.

33. Fighting in the north in 1997 and 1998 exacerbated existing social and economic problems and accentuated rehabilitation needs. Urban population displacement has been considerable but many people have now returned, although they have lost most of their assets. Urban poverty is high as a result of the collapse in the casual wage-labour market and internal and external trade. People continue to sell off their household possessions. Education, especially female education, formerly at high levels in the region, has been curtailed by the Taliban, despite continued public demand.

B. Human rights

34. The new Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, Mr. Kamal Hossain, visited Kabul in mid-March as well as Islamabad and Peshawar, Pakistan. He presented his report to the fifty-fifth session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in April (E/CN.4/1999/40).

35. Mr. Hossain, both in his oral and written reports, drew attention to the devastating impact of the years of war on the human rights of the Afghan people. He noted that an unceasing flow of arms to all sides in the conflict has been "a critical factor which contributes to the persistence of human rights abuses by subjecting men, women and children to the arbitrary rule of those who use those arms and by making people virtual hostages in their own land". He also expressed concern about the deteriorating socio-economic status of many Afghans whose basic rights were being jeopardized in the face of growing impoverishment and marginalization. He expressed particular concern about the situation of women and children, who constitute the majority of those in need of humanitarian assistance.

36. With renewed outbreaks of fighting and intensification of the war in several parts of Afghanistan, civilians are being subjected to serious violations of their rights. In response to reports of summary executions of non-combatants, including women and children, in their homes, arbitrary detentions, forced displacement, use of forced labour and burning of homes and property in the central highlands of Hazarajat, the Special Rapporteur visited Quetta, Pakistan, on 22 May where he met refugees who provided credible eye-witness accounts of gross violations of human rights during March, April and May 1999. There have also been reports of human rights abuses by Hezb-e-Wahdat forces.

37. On 23 May, Mr. Hossain visited Kandahar where he met Taliban officials and discussed with them his concern about the situation in Hazarajat. He underlined the need for the Taliban to issue instructions to their military commanders to refrain from further violations, to release all civilians who had been detained arbitrarily, including those reportedly in forced labour camps, to investigate all alleged violations and to prosecute those guilty of such violations. He also requested access to Hazarajat to assess the human rights situation and to assist in remedying the situation.

38. The authorities in Kandahar indicated that, given the security situation, it would be unsafe for the Special Rapporteur to visit Hazarajat and promised to undertake their own investigation and advise him of the outcome. Although the Taliban authorities later commented on recent events in Hazarajat, they have not provided the information requested on the alleged human rights violations. Neither does it appear that any remedial action has been taken. The Special Rapporteur has again indicated his interest in visiting Afghanistan to undertake a more thorough investigation with a view to determining the facts and reviewing his findings with the relevant authorities so that appropriate action can be taken.

39. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights is now in the process of fielding a team tasked with investigating alleged massacres and other gross violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in northern and central Afghanistan in 1997 and 1998. A Chief Investigator has been appointed and investigating work has begun. After the completion of its field work, the team will report its findings to the High Commissioner.

VI. OBSERVATIONS

40. It is most disappointing to observe the annual rite of intensified fighting in Afghanistan in the spring and summer months repeating itself once again. Hopes for peace, which were raised by direct talks between the belligerents during winter, have again proven to be illusory.

41. I remain convinced that, to break this futile annual cycle of false expectations and depressing recurrence of violence, the Afghan factions, and also those countries supporting them, must finally recognize that the conflict cannot be resolved through warfare and that a negotiated settlement represents the only viable path to lasting peace. The constant shifting of the front lines

underlines the futility of war as well as the need for sustained dialogue towards a peaceful settlement.

42. The chronic fighting and the resultant political uncertainty has exacerbated the human misery of innocent Afghan people, who have already suffered for too long and are the real victims of this endless war. Therefore, I welcome the support given by the two Afghan sides to the proposed Civil Affairs Unit of UNSMA. I am profoundly disturbed at the credible reports emanating from the central region of Afghanistan of human rights violations.

43. Once again, I strongly urge the two warring sides to resume the direct talks unconditionally and without delay. I also renew my appeal to countries concerned, in particular members of the "six plus two" informal group, to achieve closer coordination among themselves and reinvigorate their efforts to find a common approach towards a settlement of the Afghan conflict. The United Nations stands ready to assist in this regard.

44. Meanwhile, I will continue to utilize all the diplomatic means available to persuade the two sides to resume discussions and agree to halt their offensive operations and to encourage and support Afghans, of whatever political persuasion, to work together more actively to achieve national reconciliation. In this regard, I note with interest the initiative taken by the former King to prepare for a Loya Jirgah and hope that it will contribute to the creation of a solid basis for a wider political consensus.

45. I am pleased to note that the return of United Nations international staff to Afghanistan has progressed well and without major mishap. Continued efforts need to be made to ensure that international staffing levels are sufficient to support vital humanitarian and other activities.

UNITED NATIONS **S**

Security Council

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21 June 1999
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IDENTICAL LETTERS DATED 20 JUNE 1999 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL AND TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government, I have to inform you that violations of Iraq's airspace by United States and British aircraft based in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Turkey continued between 8 and 15 June 1999 and that the aircraft in question engaged in acts of aggression, reconnaissance activities and acts of provocation, as set forth in the annex hereto.

You are requested to intervene with the United States, the United Kingdom and the countries that provide the facilities for these acts of aggression, namely Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Turkey, with a view to bringing a halt to actions that, as flagrant violations of the Charter of the United Nations and of international law, pose a threat to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq.

These actions are continuing to bring death and injury to hundreds of civilians and to cause serious damage to private and public property. The logistic support that Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Turkey provide to the United States and British forces makes them key partners in the aggression being committed against Iraq, so that they share international responsibility for the consequences of these actions. The Republic of Iraq affirms its right to seek lawful compensation for the damage being inflicted on its people by these same actions.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Saeed H. HASAN
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

Violations by United States and British aircraft and damage caused, 8-15 June 1999

1. In the northern region 75 sorties were flown at speeds of 720 to 780 kilometres per hour and at altitudes of 4,000 to 10,000 metres over the following cities and towns: Dohuk, Mosul, Amadiyah, Aqrah, Tall Afar, Irbil, Zakho, Baibo and Bartalah.

2. In the southern region 348 sorties were flown at speeds of 720 to 780 kilometres per hour and at altitudes of 9,000 to 11,000 metres over the following Iraqi cities and towns: Nasiriyah, Samawah, Basrah, Amarah, Diwaniyah, Najaf, Artawi, Jalibah, Salman, Busayyah, Lasaf, Qurnah, Afak, Qal'at Salih, Qal'at Sukkar, Kifl, Ushbayjah, Shinafiyah, Hayy, Rumaythah, Shatrah, Ansab, Rifa'i and Umm Qasr.

3. At 0950 hours on 8 June 1999 United States and British F-14, F-15, F-16 and EA-6B aircraft coming from Turkish territory and supported from there by an AWACS early-warning aircraft penetrated Iraq's airspace in the northern region. They carried out 18 missions and overflew the Irbil, Dohuk, Aqrah, Mosul, Baibo, Zakho and Amadiyah areas. Our air defences, acting in self-defence, engaged the aircraft and, at 1348 hours, drove them off.

4. At 0950 hours on 9 June 1999 United States and British F-14, F-15 and F-16 aircraft coming from Turkish territory and supported from there by an AWACS early-warning aircraft penetrated Iraq's airspace in the northern region. They carried out 21 missions and overflew the Irbil, Dohuk, Aqrah, Mosul, Baibo, Zakho and Amadiyah areas. Our air defences, acting in self-defence, engaged the aircraft and, at 1350 hours, drove them off.

5. At 0950 hours on 9 June 1999 United States and British F-14, F-15, F-16, Tornado and EA-6B aircraft coming from Saudi and Kuwaiti territory penetrated Iraq's airspace in the southern region. They carried out 108 missions, 82 from Saudi airspace and 26 from Kuwaiti airspace, were supported by one AWACS and one E-2C command and control aircraft from inside Saudi and Kuwaiti territory and overflew the Nasiriyah, Samawah, Amarah, Basrah, Diwaniyah, Qurnah, Ushbayjah and Shinafiyah areas. Our air defences, acting in self-defence, engaged the aircraft and, at 1830 hours, drove them off.

6. At 1030 hours on 10 June 1999 United States and British F-14, F-15, F-16 and EA-6B aircraft coming from Saudi and Kuwaiti territory penetrated Iraq's airspace in the southern region. They carried out 82 missions, 44 from Saudi airspace and 38 from Kuwaiti airspace, were supported by an AWACS command and control aircraft from inside Saudi territory and overflew the Nasiriyah, Amarah, Basrah, Samawah, Shinafiyah, Salman, Kifl, Khidr, Ushbayjah, Rumaythah, Shatrah and Jalibah areas. Our air defences, acting in self-defence, engaged the aircraft and, at 1755 hours, drove them off.

7. At 0940 hours on 11 June 1999 United States and British F-14, F-15, F-16 and F-18 aircraft coming from Saudi and Kuwaiti territory penetrated Iraq's

airspace in the southern region. They carried out 32 missions, 22 from Saudi airspace and 10 from Kuwaiti airspace, were supported by one AWACS and one E-2C command and control aircraft from inside Saudi and Kuwaiti territory and overflew the Nasiriyah, Samawah, Diwaniyah, Artawi, Jalibah, Qal'at Sukkar, Qal'at Salih, Salman and Busayyah areas. Our air defences, acting in self-defence, engaged the aircraft and, at 1110 hours, drove them off.

8. At 1828 hours on 12 June 1999 United States and British F-14 and F-15 aircraft coming from Kuwaiti territory penetrated Iraq's airspace in the southern region. They carried out 12 missions from Kuwaiti airspace and overflew the Chabaish, Suq al-Shuyukh, Busayyah, Jalibah and Artawi areas. Our air defences, acting in self-defence, engaged the aircraft and, at 1920 hours, drove them off.

9. At 0950 hours on 13 June 1999 United States and British F-14, F-15, Tornado and EA-6B aircraft coming from Saudi and Kuwaiti territory penetrated Iraq's airspace in the southern region. They carried out 60 missions, 44 from Saudi airspace and 16 from Kuwaiti airspace, were supported by an AWACS command and control aircraft from inside Saudi territory and overflew the Nasiriyah, Samawah, Diwaniyah, Amarah, Najaf, Basrah, Qurnah, Afak, Hayy, Artawi, Jalibah, Qal'at Sukkar, Qal'at Salih, Salman and Shinafiyah areas. Our air defences, acting in self-defence, engaged the aircraft and, at 1100 hours, drove them off.

10. At 0950 hours on 14 June 1999 United States and British F-14, F-15 and F-16 aircraft coming from Turkish territory and supported from there by an AWACS early-warning aircraft penetrated Iraq's airspace in the northern region. They carried out 20 missions and overflew the Irbil, Dohuk, Mosul, Tall Afar, Baibo and Amadiyah areas. Our air defences, acting in self-defence, engaged the aircraft and, at 1335 hours, drove them off.

11. At 1045 hours on 14 June 1999 United States and British F-14, F-15 and F-16 aircraft coming from Saudi and Kuwaiti territory penetrated Iraq's airspace in the southern region. They carried out 54 missions, 30 from Saudi airspace and 24 from Kuwaiti airspace, were supported by one AWACS and one E-2C command and control aircraft from inside Saudi and Kuwaiti territory and overflew the Nasiriyah, Samawah, Diwaniyah, Afak, Najaf, Basrah, Qal'at Salih, Qal'at Sukkar and Salman areas. Our air defences, acting in self-defence, engaged the aircraft and, at 1245 hours, drove them off.

12. At 0950 hours on 15 June 1999 United States and British F-14, F-15, F-16, Tornado and EA-6B aircraft coming from Turkish territory and supported from there by an AWACS early-warning aircraft penetrated Iraq's airspace in the northern region. They carried out 16 missions and overflew the Irbil, Dohuk, Aqrah, Mosul, Tall Afar, Zakho and Amadiyah areas. Our air defences, acting in self-defence, engaged the aircraft and, at 1340 hours, drove them off.

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LETTER DATED 21 JUNE 1999 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF GERMANY TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to draw to your attention a statement dated 18 June 1999 by the Presidency of the European Union on the arms trade to and within the Great Lakes Region (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Dieter KASTRUP
Permanent Representative

99-18245 (E) 210699 220699

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Annex

[Original: English and French]

Statement dated 18 June 1999 by the Presidency of the European Union on the arms trade to and within the Great Lakes Regions

The European Union is particularly concerned by the continuing flow of arms and military equipment of all kinds, in some cases together with military and technical personnel, which is fuelling conflicts in the Great Lakes and Central Africa region, as well as in other parts of the continent.

This flow, especially when it goes to non-State entities, which are often among the main actors in those conflicts, is mostly financed through the trafficking of diamonds, gold and other precious materials, as well as through other lucrative illicit activities.

The EU is committed to supporting the capacities of regional and subregional organizations in Africa in the fields of conflict resolution and peacekeeping and, bearing in mind Security Council resolution 1209 (1998) on arms flows in Africa, considers that, in the search for a long-term solution to conflicts, high priority should be given to measures which curb arms supplies, their illicit circulation and the illicit trafficking which finances them.

In this respect, the EU recalls its Code of Conduct on Arms Exports of 8 June 1998 and underlines its determination to strictly implement it. Member States will have particular regard to criteria 3 and 4 of the EU Code of Conduct. In this regard member States will not allow exports which would provoke or prolong armed conflicts or aggravate existing tensions or conflicts in the country of final destination. Furthermore, member States will not issue an export licence if there is a clear risk that the intended recipient would use the proposed export aggressively against another country or to assert a territorial claim by force.

Member States will continue to apply these and other relevant criteria in a rigorous fashion not only until a ceasefire agreement is concluded, but until peace is re-established.

The EU also recalls the recommendations made by the United Nations regarding the flow of arms in the Great Lakes Region and Central Africa and the obligation of respecting the decisions of the United Nations on arms exports to the region.

Considering the magnitude of the diverse origins of military equipment brought to Africa, the Union will promote dialogue and cooperation on the matter with external partners, including all the countries involved in arms trade to and within the region. In order to address the problem of arms flow in the Great Lakes and Central Africa region, this dialogue shall in particular be sought with countries involved directly or through their nationals in the manufacturing or marketing of military equipment.

In this respect, the EU recalls its Joint Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons of 17 December 1998 as well as the EU Programme for Preventing and Combating Illicit Trafficking in Conventional Arms. It is the EU's intention to develop a dialogue and promote cooperation in this regard with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and other regional and subregional organizations. The EU wishes to collaborate closely with competent intergovernmental bodies in the region to enhance the effectiveness of combating such trafficking and is prepared to extend technical cooperation towards this end, as well as to consider the setting up of relevant bilateral working groups. In this framework particular efforts should be made in the areas of exchange of information, weapons collection and demobilization programmes, and measures to enhance cooperation among customs, intelligence and other law enforcement agencies.

The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union, the associated country Cyprus and the countries of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with the present statement.

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LETTER DATED 21 JUNE 1999 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF GERMANY TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to draw your attention to the statement issued on 18 June 1999 by the Presidency of the European Union on the Ethiopian/Eritrean intervention in Somalia (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Dieter KASTRUP
Permanent Representative of
Germany to the United Nations

99-18257 (E) 220699 220699

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Annex

[Original: English and French]

Statement on the Ethiopian/Eritrean intervention in Somalia issued on 18 June 1999 by the Presidency of the European Union

The European Union is deeply concerned at the renewed outbreak of fighting at the border between Ethiopia and Eritrea and reiterates its urgent appeal to both parties to halt the war and to settle their conflict through negotiations on the basis of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) framework agreement, which both sides have accepted.

The European Union urges OAU to further intensify its efforts aimed at an immediate cessation of hostilities and the implementation of the OAU framework agreement supported by the United Nations Security Council. The Union reiterates its commitment to assist in the implementation process.

The European Union is also very concerned at the illicit delivery of weapons, military equipment and military assistance to factions and other groups in Somalia in violation of the arms embargo imposed by Security Council resolution 733 (1992) of 23 January 1992, as well as at the dangers of destabilization of neighbouring countries and the spreading of terrorism produced by this influx of arms.

Aware of the security implications of the situation in Somalia for the countries of the region, the European Union calls on Ethiopia and Eritrea to stop military intervention in Somalia, re-establish their cooperation within the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the Standing Committee and help the Somalis to settle the problems deriving from their long civil war, which cannot be solved through military escalation and further fighting.

The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union, the associated country Cyprus and the European Free Trade Association countries, members of the European Economic Area align themselves with this statement.

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LETTER DATED 21 JUNE 1999 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to convey the attached communication, dated 20 June 1999, which I have received from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would bring it to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kofi A. ANNAN

99-18251 (E) 210699

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Annex

Letter dated 20 June 1999 from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization addressed to the Secretary-General

I am writing to follow up on my letter of 10 June 1999 (S/1999/663), in which I informed you of the suspension of NATO's air campaign subsequent to the successful conclusion of a military technical agreement between NATO military authorities and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). I have received confirmation from the Supreme Allied Commander Europe, General Clark, that all uniformed Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Serbian Security Forces have withdrawn from Kosovo as of today in conformity with the military technical agreement. The Alliance's limited air response and phased air campaign has therefore been terminated.

I will keep you informed of further significant developments.

(Signed) Javier SOLANA

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LETTER DATED 21 JUNE 1999 FROM THE CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF YUGOSLAVIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to forward, enclosed herewith, the statement of the Federal Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia relative to the need that all commitments under Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) be honoured by the United Nations security force in Kosovo and Metohija, the autonomous province of the Yugoslav constituent Republic of Serbia (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Vladislav JOVANOVIC
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

99-18274 (E) 220699

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Annex

Statement of the Federal Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

The Yugoslav Government held a session on Friday 18 June 1999 chaired by Prime Minister Maimer Bulatovic, and noted that Yugoslavia had duly and fully honoured all its commitments set out in the Security Council resolution on Kosovo and Metohija.

The Government demanded that the United Nations security force immediately and fully honour its commitments regarding the security and safety of all inhabitants of Kosovo and Metohija, particularly Serbs and Montenegrins who feel endangered by acts of aggression by the terrorist "KLA".

Convinced that the international security force (KFOR) would honour its commitments, the Government urged all inhabitants of Kosovo and Metohija, especially Serbs and Montenegrins, not to abandon their ancestral homes in the province.

Through its committee for cooperation with the United Nations mission for Kosovo and Metohija, the Government requested that a special civilian agreement be signed as soon as possible with the United Nations. Such an agreement is usually signed between the United Nations and any country to which it sends a mission.

On the basis of Yugoslavia's integrity and sovereignty reaffirmed by the Security Council, regulations on the economic system must be defined, especially as regards monetary matters, foreign trade, customs, sanitation and health care.

The Government noted that all citizens of Yugoslavia were united with the defence forces and the State leadership in resistance to the aggressor and that Yugoslav nationals abroad and emigrants had made a no less considerable contribution to the resistance as well. Even before the onset of the NATO aggression, while Yugoslavia was being subjected to tremendous pressures, Yugoslav nationals abroad organized rallies expressing their unity and solidarity with their endangered homeland. In the endeavours to make the truth public worldwide, Serb nationals Dragan Rajkovic and Borislav Jamina gave their lives in Paris and Geneva. They had succeeded in getting support for their just struggle in many countries.

Yugoslavia nationals abroad and emigrants also collected humanitarian aid and sent it to the homeland while bombs were raining down.

The Yugoslav Government expressed its deepest gratitude to all known and unknown combatants and hard workers throughout the world who spared no effort to give their humane and patriotic contribution to national defence. It expects that the citizens and emigrants will also contribute to the recovery and reconstruction of the country in a demonstration of unity, patriotism and solidarity.

The Government decided to exempt the radio and television stations, which have placed their facilities at the disposal of the Yugoslav Army Supreme Command Staff in order to fully inform the people of national defence against the NATO aggression, from paying for the use of broadcast frequencies for six months.